Eng. Poetry vol 69.

HOBBY-HORSES:

READ AT

BATH-EASTON.

—— QUOT CAPITUM VIVUNT, TOTIDEM STUDIORUM MILLIA.

HOR. SAT.

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[Price One Shilling.]

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RAPH-EASTON.

[Price One Shilling.]

HOBBY-HORSES.

WITHIN theſe walls full many a Muſe grew bold,
Attun'd her pipes, and ſweeteſt numbers roll'd;
And ſweet the numbers roll'd in Beauty's cauſe,
And circling Beauty beam'd a bright applauſe.
But now that Affectation wings her ſpeed,
From the fool writers to the more that read;
And Critic Senſe, mechanically fine,
Weighs word by word, and meaſures line by line;
No longer Fancy ſheds her lively ray,
Wit points the thought, nor Love inſpires the lay.

18

Such love as warbled from my Mira's tongue,
Made angels liſten as their ſiſter ſung.

As various features in the face we find,
As various thoſe that form the human mind;
Some by their beauty or diſtortion ſtrike,
All bear reſemblance, none exactly like.
The ſwarthy Æthiop, that adores his Sun,
The fair Circaſſian, by that fair undone;
No ſtronger ſhades contraſt their outward ſkin,
Than thoſe which Nature hath diffus'd within.
Did all, to check the foul envenom'd lye,
Stamp the retailing tongue with infamy,
Tattle might damn the *ton* and *reformation*,
And Bath for once fall ſhort of defamation,
'Till Praiſe would wield the ſcythe that Slander bore,
And myriads die for one that bled before.
Did all contend but with one common view,
True to themſelves, and to their country true,

Stateſmen

Stateſmen might tremble at their tottering pow'r,
And patriots, perhaps, ſurvive the hour:
Yet by ſuch proſtitution, we beſt know
How falſe the flame with which their virtues glow;
To limit credit upon reaſon's plan,
And make man's actions conſtitute the man.
Did all aſſert the lily's ſofter dye,
The jetty ringlet, and dark ebon eye,
Beauty had glow'd in artificial ſhade,
Nor love immortaliz'd the *nut-brown maid*.
Did the ſame hand that pencil'd Lyra's face,
With each ſucceſſive touch convey a grace,
What Muſe with-hold her tributary lays,
Wanton in love, and diſſolute in praiſe?
Nature, more provident, foreſaw that hate,
Not love, muſt on one common love await;
Therefore with Fancy's beam our paſſions drew,
Featur'd with life and varied in their hue.
Hence beauty ſparkles in a ſhade of jet,
Blooms thro' the fair, or blazes in brunette.

The ſpiral waiſt, that Strephon's love diſarms,
Unfolds, to Ranger's eye, ten thouſand charms.
View the Greek feature, regularly fine,
And the bold prominence of th' aquiline;
In which the ſtandard of perfection plac'd?
In both, perhaps in neither, in the waiſt.
At London, in exuberance of hip;
Aſk at Vienna---'twill be ſaid, the lip;
At Pekin, in the foot, the head, the air,
And at Kamtſzatka, in the Lord knows where.
Beauty and Grace no fix'd criterion know,
They're oft in what they do, and do not ſhow;
As objects, into different mediums put,
Strike on the ſight, and ſeem where they be not.
The mind as various, intricate, and nice,
As character'd in inconſiſtencies;
Nature's prime weather-cock, wherewith ſhe ſhows
The trembling line in which our paſſion blows;
That, true as Dollond's dial to the ſun,
Rounds every quarter, and is fix'd at none.

Hence

Hence each profeſſion ſpreads a different lure,
Vice flirts in teens, and dotage glows impure.
From the meek morals of the choſen few,
With gowns and conſcience of one common hue,
To *Bolus*, periwig'd in full degree,
Got in a mortar, chriſten'd with a fee.
Jews, Gameſters, Lawyers, Critics, ſelf-dubb'd Wits,
Courtiers by whim, and Patriots by fits,
Call it Caprice, Whim, Nature, Hobby-horſe,
All boldly drive, and each his ſeparate courſe.
'Tis Thraſo's Hobby-horſe, a love of place,
To elbow Nobles and ſalute his Grace.
Nor wonder to be with the Great his paſſion,
It gave him birth, and gave his mother faſhion.
Convert to every titled argument,
He bows affirmatives, and grins aſſent;
While lambent ſmiles play round his empty look,
Like ſun-beams trembling in the ſhallowy brook,
And folly, brighten'd into pert grimace,
Stares thro' his broad vacuity of face.

Some term this flattery—how weakly blind!
Term it ambition, that ſublimes the mind,
Diffuſive as the vital air, and gives,
Like it, the life wherewith our being lives.
This breath of Paraſites re-breathes the Peer,
And with it taints the royal atmoſphere;
Where well-plum'd Courtiers baſk beneath that ſmile,
Unknown its ſource, and fruitful as the Nile.
"When does your wife lie in?" the monarch ſaid,
"When't pleaſe your Majeſty," the peer reply'd.
No Hobby-horſe a ſtranger compoſition,
Than that which mounts our modern politician.
See him, with haggard eyes and half-worn pen,
Ponder, blot, write, and write and blot again!
Th' inſpir'd voice once made the ſun ſtand ſtill,
Scarce ſhort of that can Quidnunc with his quill.
'Tis his to ſhift the empire of the main,
To veſt the trident in the hands of Spain;
At a mere daſh, trade, armies, millions ſink,
And Britain's delug'd in a—flood of ink.

With ſcarce one groat to brave the bailiff's pow'r,
Or purchaſe life beyond the preſent hour;
To future ſhame and preſent danger loſt,
Here London Courants, here the Morning Poſt,
With each in hand the ſlumbering Cato's lain,
One ſerves his antidote, and one his bane—
" This in a moment damns Ways, Means, Supply;
" And this informs him they ſhall never die."
Courtiers and Patriots are but in name
The oppoſite, in principle the ſame.
Pow'r is the goal, and Parliament the ring,
All boldly mount the ſelf-ſame hackney'd thing,
Which ſome have chriſten'd *Country*, and ſome *King*.
On his broad back they've ſaddled Conſtitution,
With *patent ſtirrups* ſold by proſtitution;
For *patent* now-a-days is grown ſo common,
'Tis odds but Prieſtly makes us *patent women*;
And if he brings his preſent point to bear,
Will doubtleſs make them live by *patent air*.

But one ſtep more to ſyſtemize the whole,
Fix his *materials* and compoſe their *ſoul.*
Think you that ------- or ------- care one jot,
Whether Britannia holds the beam or not;
Provided each can gain his ſeparate ends,
Pow'r for himſelf, and places for his friends.
With the ſame rage that they berogue each other,
With the ſame eaſe they'd title it to brother.
All-courtly gold can make all parties civil,
And mortgage ſoul and country to the Devil.
Such wide extremes, ſuch thin partitions, have
The penſion'd hireling and the factious knave!
Behold Lothario play the patriot part---
Unmaſk, and read the traitor in his heart;
While thoſe, declaiming in their country's cauſe,
Champions of truth, and guardians of the laws,
At length ſucceeding to the helm of ſtate,
Steer the ſame courſe, and meet the gen'ral hate.
Quick as cameleons, ſhed their dubious hue,
To no one ſhade but proſtitution true.

Yet ſome there were by nobler thought inſpir'd,
By wiſdom temper'd, and by virtue fir'd.
Such Chatham was---his patriotic ſoul,
Like heaven's bright orb, ſhone glory thro' the whole.
And bright the glory with which Britain blaz'd,
And wond'ring nations trembled as they gaz'd;
Like leſſer ſatellites preſerv'd their courſe,
Balanc'd and pois'd by this one central force.
His reigning paſſion was his country's pow'r;
This ting'd his natal breath and lateſt hour.
What Chatham felt, O Savile, learn to feel,
His virtuous ardour for the public weal!
That, nobly fix'd, diffus'd the ſteady light
Of bold integrity and conſcious right.
Preſerve the grand career you firſt began,
And cloſe the Hero, as thou liv'ſt the Man;
Stem the ſtrong torrent of Deſpotic ſway,
But yield to juſt Prerogative a way;
Leſt, when obſtructed in its uſual courſe,
It burſt the mounds, and Freedom feel its force.

Let acts like theſe inſpire thy patriot breaſt,
Let Bourbon tremble, and let Britain reſt;
And Britain's ſelf ſhall ſound thy loud applauſe,
And Savile be what once her Chatham was.

A Poet's Hobby-horſe is pen and ink;
This rides for glory, that for meat and drink.
Oft in this ring they ſpur their ſteeds to death,
And the beſt ſteed but proves the better breath.
This clears whole fields of paper, he's ſo fleet;
This ſcarce has wind to clear one octave ſheet.
Nor wonder ſometimes Pegaſus ſhould creep,
The road is heavy, and the ſoil is deep.
All neck or nothing for the jury-room,
Where briefleſs lawyers ſtamp the poet's doom.
In all the pomp of Weſtminſter vacation,
Come down and judge us by anticipation.
Parnaſſian judges, they adjudge the prize,
See with their ears, and liſten with their eyes.
Theſe gaping oracles of taſte profound,
Caught by ſuch dulcet nothingneſs of ſound,

Fancy their ravings for Parnaſſian dreams,
And muddy numbers for Pierian ſtreams.
While Crito ſwears what he has writ is beſt,
Would read that wit, and make that wit the teſt;
All wiſh both wit and reading to perdition,
Yet crown that wit, to ſave the repetition.
Poets a moſt prolific race of late,
And wits that juſt as quickly propagate;
For wit is every where the general paſſion,
And want of wit infers the want of faſhion.
Plaiger by way of telling a good thing,
On the ſame pun will fifty changes ring,
And ſhakes his empty noddle and out-throws
Freſh puns, which modeſtly he ſtyles *bon-mots*.
Some writers be of an amphibious race,
And proſe and verſe their elemental place.
Such he, whoſe wit made wond'ring ſenates roar,
And thoſe to bluſh that never bluſh'd before.
Anticipation gave him ſterling fame,
The *Wreath of Faſhion*, a poetic name.

And Nature gave, and at the gift repines,
At penſion'd wit and proſtituted lines.
Be your's, O *Tickell*, to correct this vice,
That deals out praiſe or cenſure at a price,
And in one grand example prove to men,
How weak is Wit, where Party holds the pen;
And while you glow with more than virtue's flame,
And all admire from whence ſuch virtue came,
Each literary Swiſs ſhall dread thy rage,
Diſmiſs their weapons, and no more engage.

Enough of party writers; and to thoſe
Whoſe ſtyle is beſt reflected in their cloaths.
In dubious language, with French idioms lac'd,
They ſtamp the *ton*, and modify the *taſte*,
Read and pronounce, as whim or fancy hit,
The ſelf-ſame ſubject, ribaldry or wit;
And hold no converſe but in *repartee*,
And pen no writing but a *jeu d'eſprit*.
This inſect race in every climate ſwarms,
Where beauty's ray the genial climate warms.

Some fly to Bath to breathe a purer air,
And gayly volatile buzz round the Fair;
Or here, the candidates for bright applauſe,
Like ſilver fiſh they gambol in the vaſe.
Spangled with ſimile and ſcal'd with ore,
Some ſwim, ſome ſink, and ſink to riſe---no more.

Some poets by a ſimile commence,
(A ſimile to any thing but ſenſe)
Chriſten their nine-months labour with a pun,
And leave it, to ape genius, half undone;
Then circulate the nonſenſe they have writ,
Streak'd with Italics, and pronounce it wit.

Some plaintive pen the elegiac lay,
Stupid and heavy as their vital clay.
Placid as Avon's ſtream the numbers flow,
Uncurl'd by wit, and regularly ſlow.

Others, to hit the palate of the town,
Mix up *reports* to make the pill go down,
And ſtyle the compoſition a *lampoon*.

When bold abortion ſtares throughout the ſcene,
Like Chineſe figures on an Indian ſcreen,
And metaphors, ſpread out in rich brocade,
Glare thro' a dark deformity of ſhade.
Ev'n here had Wit, in monumental jaws,
Paſs'd to the ſubſtance of the marble vaſe;
(For as moſt cements will unite in time,
Why not the lifeleſs ſtone, and lifeleſs rhyme?)
Did not the rays of circling beauty give
Fire to the Muſe, and bid her genius live.

F I N I S.